United Nations

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THURSDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Haitian President, addressing General Assembly, asks for total blockade of Haiti to bring about compliance with Governors Island Agreement; conveys "message of peace" to Armed Forces and urges leaders to step down; stresses link between democracy and non-violence.

+ Under-Secretary-General Jonah, in Burundi as Secretary-General's Envoy, has meetings with Government officials and Army commanders in Bujumbura; says there is "power vacuum" in country.

+ International Tribunal on war crimes committeed in former Yugoslavia to hold inaugural session in The Hague from 17 November; Commission of Experts examining alleged crimes holds eighth session in Geneva.

+ United States tells Fifth Committee that United Nations funding mechanisms should better reflect economic growth in certain Member States; Japan says 10-year base period for calculating national income allows for stability and consistency in scale of assessments.

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Haitian President Jean-Bertrand Aristide today asked for "a total and complete" blockade of Haiti in order to bring about compliance with the Governors Island Agreement. In an address to the General Assembly, he urged the military rulers in Haiti to step down, warning that the flagrant violation of the Agreement would accelerate a move towards national breakdown. If General Raoul Cedras and the Army High Command were to step down tomorrow, he said, he would immediately summon Parliament to vote on bills dealing with the police force and the issue of amnesty.

President Aristide said that he wanted to send a "message of peace" to the Armed Forces, and expressed the hope that United Nations technical assistance would make it possible to professionalize them. He stressed that democracy and non-violence were inextricably connected. The military coup had brought about a genocide -- the assassination of a people in order to dominate them -- in which more than 4,000 Haitians had died. Institutionalized violence prevented the enjoyment of constitutionally-guaranteed human rights.

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Haitians sought a stable State based on the law, ideological pluralism, political change and economic growth, he continued. An equation had to be drawn between political reconciliation and justice; what was at stake was peace in Haiti, in the hemisphere and in the world. He urged Haitians to build unity in diversity, and emphasized that his message was "no" to vengeance, "no" to violence, "no" to going unpunished, and "yes" to justice.

President Aristide met today with Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali at United Nations Headquarters and discussed with him, among other things, efforts to bring about compliance with the Governors Island Agreement and the effect of sanctions on the country, according to a United Nations spokesman.

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Under-Secretary-General James Jonah, in Burundi as the Envoy of the Secretary-General, met today with the country's Prime Minister, Foreign Minister and Secretary of State for Cooperation at the French Embassy in Bujumbura, according to a United Nations spokesman. He also met with Army commanders, who conveyed their views as to how the situation in the country could be resolved.

Mr. Jonah had described the situation in Burundi as "catastrophic" and had said there was "a power vacuum" in the country, the spokesman reported. Mr. Jonah was expected to meet again with members of the Government, and to take a plane tour over parts of the country to survey the devastation from the air.

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The International Tribunal established to prosecute war crimes committed in the territory of the former Yugoslavia will hold its inaugural session in The Hague beginning on 17 November, according to a United Nations spokesman. The session is expected to focus on procedural matters.

Meanwhile, the Commission of Experts examining alleged war crimes committed in the former Yugoslavia held its eighth session in Geneva yesterday. The Commission reviewed the progress made and the problems faced in on-site investigations recently started in Sectors East and West in Croatia -- excavations of alleged mass graves, and the Medak pocket in Sector South -- a preliminary investigation of alleged acts of ethnic cleansing, as well as in Dubrovnik -- an investigation of alleged unlawful destruction of cultural property.

The Commission elaborated plans to investigate detention camps, torture, extrajudicial executions and mass sexual assault which are soon to be the subject of field investigations. Those investigations will be funded by the voluntary Trust Fund set up for the work of the Commission. The Commission will hold its next session in Geneva from 13 to 15 December.

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United Nations funding mechanisms should better reflect the impressive economic growth enjoyed by certain Member States, the United States representative told the Fifth Committee Committee (Administrative and Budgetary) today as it continued discussing the scale of assessments for apportioning the Organization's expenses. The 10-year statistical base period currently used for calculating national income provided a distorted view of the relative economic strength of Member States, he said.

The Japanese representative told the Committee that the 10-year base period should be retained because it allowed for stability and consistency in scale of assessments. The representative of Sweden, speaking on behalf of the five Nordic countries, said that a shorter statistical base period would be more technically sound than the base period used currently. He noted that an independent advisory group on United Nations financing had recommended a three-year base period. The representative of Bangladesh urged that the debt burdens of least developed countries be considered when determining assessments.

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CORRECTION:

In the Daily Highlights of Wednesday, 27 October 1993, the second complete paragraph on page 2 should have read as follows:

"Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali today appealed to Morocco and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Saguia el-Hamra and Rio de Oro (POLISARIO) to live up to their obligations under the Settlement Plan for Western Sahara after direct talks between the parties, scheduled to resume last Monday, were cancelled. While the Memorandum of Understanding which laid down the ground rules for the talks gave to each party the right to choose the composition of its delegation, the POLISARIO delegation found it impossible to resume the talks, which were initiated three months ago at Laayoune, because the Moroccan delegation included former POLISARIO officials, according to a United Nations spokesman."

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